IN THE CLAIMS

1.-4. (canceled)

5. (previously presented): For a user having a toe and standing on a skate, a skate braking mechanism comprising:

a brake; and

a lifter connected to the brake and pressable upward by the toe of the user to actuate the brake;

whereby the brake connected to the lifter is actuated according to a natural motion of the user to maintain balance;

wherein the brake comprises a brake shoe coupled to the lifter, and wherein the brake shoe bears on at least one wheel of the skate when actuated.

6. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the brake shoe is directly coupled to the lifter.

7.-8. (canceled)

9. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the brake shoe comprises fiber-reinforced elastomer.

10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 9, wherein the elastomer comprises urethane.

12. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 5, comprising a return spring counteracting an upward pressing motion of the toe.

13. (previously presented): For a user having a toe and standing on a skate, a skate braking mechanism comprising:

a brake; and

a lifter connected to the brake and pressable upward by the toe of the user to actuate the brake;

whereby the brake connected to the lifter is actuated according to a natural motion of the user to maintain balance;

wherein the lifter is positioned above the toe forward of metatarsals of the foot of the user.

14. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 13, wherein the lifter is pivoted to be moved upward by the toe.

15. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 14, wherein the lifter is pivoted about a pivot axis adjacent to a joint between a metatarsal and a phalanx of the toe.

16. (canceled)

17. (previously presented): For a user having a toe and standing on a skate, a skate braking mechanism comprising:

a brake; and

a lifter connected to the brake and pressable upward by the toe of the user to actuate the brake;

whereby the brake connected to the lifter is actuated according to a natural motion of the user to maintain balance;

wherein the brake comprises a brake shoe that is pivoted to rotate about an axle of a first wheel, so as to bear against a second wheel.

18. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the lifter is pivoted to be moved upward by the toe.

19. (previously presented): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 17, wherein the lifter is pivoted to be moved upward by the toe.

20. (new): The skate brake according to claim 18, wherein the lifter is pivoted about a pivot axis adjacent to a joint between a metatarsal and a phalanx of the toe.

21. (new): The skate brake according to claim 19, wherein the lifter is pivoted about a pivot axis adjacent to a joint between a metatarsal and a phalanx of the toe.

22. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the brake shoe is coupled to the lifter via a linkage.

23. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 13, wherein the brake shoe is directly coupled to the lifter.

24. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 13, wherein the brake shoe is coupled to the lifter via a linkage.

25. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 17, wherein the brake shoe is directly coupled to the lifter.

26. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 17, wherein the brake shoe is coupled to the lifter via a linkage.

27. (new): The skate braking mechanism according to claim 9, wherein the brake shoe comprises a portion of fiber-reinforced elastomer belt.